

## Some of ALEC's Corporate Agenda Has Become Law

### Truth in Sentencing & Private Prisons



When current Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker was a state representative, he was an ALEC member and introduced several bills proposed by ALEC, including "Truth in Sentencing" and bills to privatize the state's prison system.

Passed in Wisconsin in 1997, "Truth in Sentencing" requires inmates to serve their full sentence and reduced incentives for earlier parole or supervised release. The Walker program has inflated prison populations and greatly increased the amount of taxpayer dollars spent on prisons - in Wisconsin, to [an estimated \\$1.8 billion through 2025](#). In many states, Truth in Sentencing has increased profits for private prison companies like the [Corrections Corporation of America](#), a member of ALEC's Private Sector board. In 1999, then-Rep. Scott Walker also introduced [two bills](#) that would allow private prisons in Wisconsin. While those bills did not pass, some inmates were contracted out to private prisons in other states, and [the Corrections Corporation of America has registered lobbyists](#) in the state ever since.

A former head of Wisconsin's prison system who is currently a University of Wisconsin Law Professor, Walter Dickey, told American Radio Works it is "shocking" that lawmakers would write sentencing policy with help from ALEC, a group that gets funding, and supposedly "expertise," from a private prison corporation. "I don't know that they know anything about sentencing," he said. "They know how to build prisons, presumably, since that's the business they're in. They don't know anything about probation and parole. They don't know about the development of alternatives. They don't know about how public safety might be created and defended in communities in this state and other states."

The Wisconsin state legislature apparently recognized the folly of Truth in Sentencing and rolled back the law this past decade. However, when Scott Walker became governor, he reversed this progress and requested legislation to restore the (ALEC-based) Truth in Sentencing scheme, despite the costs to taxpayers and despite claiming Wisconsin was "broke." It is unknown whether privatized prisons will soon follow.

To learn more about this story, click [here](#), or [here](#).

## The NRA's "Castle Doctrine Act" in Wisconsin

In 2011, Wisconsin ALEC members introduced AB-69, a bill containing strikingly similar provisions to the ALEC "Castle Doctrine Act" approved by the National Rifle Association. The bill allows homeowners to shoot and kill a person they claim is breaking into their home, without fear of civil liability if it turns out the person shot was innocent, like a girlfriend sneaking in. A marked-up version of AB-69, noting the related sections of the ALEC [Castle Doctrine Act](#), can be found [here](#).

*Have any of these bills been introduced or enacted in YOUR state? If so, please add that information to the [Community Discussion](#) page.*

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For an updated look at ALEC's education agenda in Wisconsin, see the Center for Media and Democracy's in-depth report, "[ALEC Exposed in Wisconsin: The Hijacking of a State](#)."